

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 NEW DE 01014 211401Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 BIB-01 /067 W
-----211508Z 127729 /43

R 211157Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 730
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 1014

PASS USIA FOR INA, IOP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, IN
SUBJECT: GOI ANNOUNCES SUSPENSION OF CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS

REF: NEW DELHI 0988

1. THE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, V.C. SHUKLA, ANNOUNCED THURSDAY NIGHT THAT PRESS CENSORSHIP WOULD NOT BE ENFORCED DURING THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR A NEW LOK SABHA.

2. SHUKLA LEFT SOME DOUBT WHETHER THE GOI WAS RESCINDING THE CENSORSHIP ORDER PASSED WITH THE DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY 19 MONTHS AGO, OR HAD MERELY DECIDED NOT TO ENFORCE IT FOR AN UNDESIGNATED TIME PERIOD; IN EFFECT TO SEE HOW IT GOES.

3. QUOTE: THE GOVT HOPES THAT THE PRESS WILL FULFILL THE
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 NEW DE 01014 211401Z

TRUST BY CONTRIBUTING TO THE STRENGTH OF THE SOCIAL FABRIC
AND REFRAINING FROM PUBLICATION OF ANY REPORTS OR COMMENTS WHICH
MAY DISTURB LAW AND ORDER OR JEOPARDIZE THE NEWLY WON GAINS
AND THE POLICIES INITIATED TO SERVE NATIONAL INTEREST OF LOWER
THE STANDARDS OF PUBLIC LIFE OR THE REPUTATION OF THE PRESS
ITSELF. UNQUOTE

4. MINISTER SHUKLA ALSO REFERRED TO THE CODE OF ETHICS OF JOURNALISM AND ASKED THE NEWSPAPERS TO "SCRUPULOUSLY" ADHERE TO IT. SHUKLA NOTED THAT THE CODE HAS BEEN EVOLVED BY A GROUP OF EDITORS AND HAD BEEN ADAPTED BY VARIOUS JOURNALISM ORGANIZATIONS. AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, THE ORIGINAL CODE WAS PREPARED BY PROFESSIONAL NEWSMEN AND EDITORS, THEN WAS LATER REWORKED, REPORTEDLY UNDER DIRECT GOVT INFLUENCE.

5. SHUKLA'S STATEMENT SAID THAT TEN WEEKS AFTER THE DECLARATION OF THE EMERGENCY "PRE-CENSORSHIP WAS INFORMALLY WITHDRAWN, EXCEPT ON SOME SUBJECTS, ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT EDITORS THEMSELVES UNDERTOOK TO OBSERVE GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM. MOST SECTIONS OF THE PRESS HAVE ABIDED BY THE GUIDELINES AND HELPED THE EASING OF THE SITUATION. SELF-REGULATION BY THE PRESS HAS BEEN AND ACCEPTED OBJECTIVE IN OUR COUNTRY FOR A LONG TIME", HE SAID. (THE GUIDELINES CONTAIN 16 POINTS GENERALLY TELLING WRITERS AND EDITORS WHAT THEY CANNOT SAY.)

6. WHAT SHUKLA LEFT UNSAID WAS THAT THE GOVT HAS FELT NO INHIBITIONS TOWARD SLAPPING PRE-CENSORSHIP ON ERRING NEWSPAPERS (INDIAN EXPRESS, THE STATESMAN) AND JOURNALS (MAINSTREAM, HIMMAT) WHEN IT SUITED ITS PURPOSES. THIS EVEN WAS DONE WHEN ONE OR ANOTHER GOVT OFFICIAL WAS PROCLAIMING THAT THERE WAS NO CENSORSHIP. ADDITIONALLY, THE GOVT MAINTAINS, UNDER THE PREVENTION OF PUBLICATION OF OBJECTIONABLE MATTER ACT OF FEBRUARY 1976, THE POWER TO PUNISH ERRANT EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS. FOR THE MOST PART, EDITORS HAVE FOLLOWED THE GUIDELINES AND HAVE ACCEPTED SELF-CENSORSHIP. IN VIEW OF THE CLEAR LOOSENING OF RESTRICTIONS EVEN PRIOR TO THIS ANNOUNCEMENT (SEE REFTEL), WE ARE INCLINED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 NEW DE 01014 211401Z

UNLESS WE ARE SHOWN OTHERWISE BY EVENTS, TO BELIEVE THAT THE GOI'S ACTION IS A SINCERE ONE. CHIEF GOI CENSOR (D'PENHA) TOLD AP THAT HIS OFFICE WAS CLOSING DOWN. WE ARE CHECKING THAT, AS WELL AS WHETHER PRE-CENSORSHIP ON SENSITIVE EXTERNAL ISSUES SUCH AS BANGLADESH (IN FORCE FOR MONTHS) WILL ALSO NOW END.

7. AS REPORTED EARLIER, ALL CENSORSHIP OF FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS, EXCEPT FOR TV, WAS REMOVED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AND CORRESPONDENTS HAVE BEEN FREE TO REPORT WHATEVER THEY WANT, WITH NO HINDRANCE. (THE ONE EXCEPTION WAS THAT OF A WEST GERMAN NEWSMAN WHO RAN AFOUL FOR A STORY HE DID ON SANJAY GANDHI, BUT IN THE END NOTHING CAME OF THE THREATS AGAINST HIM.) THE ABC CORRESPONDENT IN DELHI INFORMED US ON THE DAY BEFORE THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY SHUKLA THAT HE EXPECTED THAT EVEN THE RESTRICTIONS ON TV FILM WOULD BE LIFTED. WHETHER THAT IN FACT HAS HAPPENED, WE DO NOT YET KNOW. SCHNEIDER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT REFORM, CENSORSHIP, INFORMATION CONTROL, THE PRESS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE01014
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770023-0092
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770129/aaaaazra.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 11fa60d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 NEW DELHI 988
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3536030
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOI ANNOUNCES SUSPENSION OF CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/11fa60d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009